

“A Seed Act for Farmers, not Corporations – Stop Bill C-18”

Organize a Public Meeting on Bill C-18

Raising awareness and taking action to stop Bill C-18 is a current priority for the NFU. Local public meetings in communities across Canada are an important part of our work. Here are some guidelines, tips and suggestions for organizing a successful public meeting. By putting on such a meeting you will educate yourself and your community about the threat of Bill C-18 and on the value of public plant breeding and farm-saved seed.

Learn about Bill C-18 and the NFU’s positive vision for an alternative

Educate yourself about **Bill C-18**, **UPOV ‘91** and the ***Fundamental Principles of a Farmers Seed Act***. Read the information provided in NFU mail-outs, emails, the Union Farmer Quarterly and Newsletter and on the website at <http://www.nfu.ca/issue/stop-bill-c-18>

If you are not part of an active NFU Local, you can organize a public meeting anyways. Talk to friends and members of other community organizations who share your concerns and ask if they can help put on a public meeting in your area. If that is not possible you may be able to speak at another group or club’s regular meeting to present information about Bill C-18 and encourage them to get involved in our campaign.

Tips for organizing a successful public meeting:

Hold a meeting with the organizing group/committee to make plans and assign duties and roles.

- Ensure someone takes notes at the meeting.
- Decide on the date, time and location of the meeting.
- Book an appropriate hall or meeting room.
- Develop and carry out a publicity plan that makes sense for your community.
- Plan to debrief with your fellow organizers right after the public meeting ends. Talk about what went well and what you might do differently next time.
- Decide on some follow up action to keep the momentum going.

Decide who will do each of the following tasks before the public meeting:

- Contact other groups and ask them to promote the public meeting to their members
- Write a media advisory and Public Service Announcement (PSA) and submit it to local media
- Be the group’s spokesperson to the local media before and at the event
- Write letters to the editor before the event to raise awareness about Bill C-18 and to tell people about your meeting
- Make copies of handout material
- Look after getting a data projector, laptop and screen (if needed) and running the equipment.

Decide who will do each of the following tasks at the public meeting:

- Chair the meeting.
- Present the PowerPoint
- Make a pitch to ask for donations and encourage people to join the NFU.
- Pass the hat or look after a donation jar.
- Greet people as they come and get them to put their name, phone number and email on a contact list. (See below for blank contact sheet)
- Look after a table to get signatures for the petition and hand out postcards, membership forms and other information

- Look after refreshments
- Clean up

Publicity Ideas

- Posters – put them up at least a week ahead of time, in places people who might be interested in our issues often gather.
- Submit a Commentary such as “*Bill C18, the Agricultural Growth Act -- Growth for whom?*” by Jan Slomp, NFU President, to your local newspaper (know the paper’s deadline and make sure it is submitted early enough to be printed before your meeting).
- Write letters to the editor of your local paper and mention the event.
- Submit Public Service Announcements (PSA) to your local media (radio, paper, cable TV), church bulletins and community newsletters. PSAs are short notices with the basic information (what, when, where and a contact name and number for more information). Here’s a [how-to guide](#) for writing PSAs.
- Send out a notice to local media. Here’s a [how-to guide](#) for preparing media advisories.
- Social media – Post a Facebook event, Tweet to your Twitter followers, “like” the event, invite your friends, retweet messages, etc. to make sure your messages are highly visible.
- Email lists – Send message to your email contacts, post the PSA on any relevant list-serves
- Ask supportive organizations and allies to send an invitation to the public meeting to their email lists.
- Radio call-in shows – Comment on a related story and mention your upcoming public meeting.

Make copies of information to handout

(available at the NFU website at <http://www.nfu.ca/issue/stop-bill-c-18>)

- Petition
- Postcard
- NFU information about Bill C-18
- Backgrounder – Bill C-18 A Corporate Business Promotion Act
- The Fundamental Principles of a Farmers Seed Act
- NFU membership forms

Sample Agenda for a Public Meeting

“A Seed Act for Farmers, not Corporations – Stop Bill C-18”	
7:00	Introduction by Organizer
7:15	PowerPoint Presentation— Overview of Bill C-18 and its implications for Seed
7:45	Questions
8:00	Table/Small Group Discussions of C-18’s implications
8:20	Report back from Groups
8:30	Call to Action - Appeal for donations and memberships
8:45	Concluding remarks
9:00	Refreshments, networking and visiting
9:30	Clean up and short debriefing meeting of organizers

